

Message Text

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TAGS: ETRD EEWT US UR

SUBJ: SOVIET PRESS TREATMENT OF US ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND BILATERAL
TRADE ISSUES

REF: MOSCOW 2302

1. SUMMARY: CENTRAL PRESS FEB 20 AND 21 CARRIES WIDE-RANGING COVERAGE OF VARIOUS INTENAL US ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES AND CURRENT US-USSR TRADE MATTERS. AS IN EARLIER PRESS REPORTING (FOLLOWING SOVIET DECISION ON NON-IMPLEMENTATION OF 1972 TRADE AGREEMENT), SUM TOTAL OF LATEST REPORTAGE IS PERCEPTION THAT US IS EAGER TO INCREASE TRADE WITH SOVIET UNION AND IMPLICATION THAT US WILL BE THE LOSER IF BILATERAL TRADE TAPERS OFF. END SUMMARY.

2. IZVESTIYA OF FEB 20 EXTENSIVELY REPORTED SIGNING BY GULF OIL PRESIDENT JAMES LEE OF INDIVIDUAL COOPERATION AGREEMENTS WITH VARIOUS INDUSTRIAL MINISTERS (SEE REFTEL).
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BOTH IZVESTIYA AND FEB 21 PRAVDA (LATTER ON FRONT PAGE) CARRIED

SHORT ARTICLES ON MEETING BETWEEN KOSYGIN AND LEE, WHICH WAS DESCRIBED AS HAVING TAKEN PLACE IN "FRINEDLY" ATMOSPHERE. (TASS VESTNIK FOR FEB 21 CHARACTERIZES KOSYGIN-LEE TALKS AS "FRANK AND CONSTRUCTIVE," DURING WHICH WERE DISCUSSED POSSIBILITIES FOR CARRYING OUT SEVERAL INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS WITH PARTICIPATION OF GULF.)

3. FEB 20 IZVESTIYA ALSO CARRIES SHORT TASS REPORT ON MEETINGS WHICH DEPUTY FOREIGN TRADE MINISTER ALKHIMOV (IN US FOR MEETINGS OF US-USSR TRADE AND ECONOMIC COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE) HELD WITH SECRETARIES SIMON AND DENT. ACCORDING TO TASS MEETINGS, WHICH WERE HELD IN "BUSINESS-LIKE AND CONSTRUCTIVE ATMOSPHERE," DEALT WITH PROSPECTS FOR DEVELOPING US-USSR TRADE TIES AND ROLE OF TRADE AND ECONOMIC COUNCIL IN THAT PROCESS.

4. BOTH PRAVDA AND TRUD OF FEB 21 FEATURE SECRETARY DENT'S REMARKS BEFORE CHICAGO BUSINESSMEN'S GROUP IN TASS DISPATCH ENTITLED "FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE." THE SECRETARY IS QUOTED AS HAVING EXPRESSED REGRET OVER ABROGATION (OTMENA) OF US-USSR TRADE AGREEMENT AS RESULT OF DISCRIMINATORY AMENDMENTS ADDED BY CONGRESS IN TRADE ACT. NOTING THAT US POLICY IS TO FACILITATE EXPANSION OF TRADE TIES WITH USSR, SECRETARY DENT IS FURTHER QUOTED AS STATING THAT USG WILL CONTINUE TO USE ALL MEANS FOR IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH SOVIET UNION.

5. ADJACENT TO SECRETARY DENT ARTICLE IN PRAVDA IS TASS REPORT FROM WASHINGTON ON PASSAGE BY SENATE OF BILL FREEZING FOR 90 DAYS AUTHORITY OF PRESIDENT TO INTRODUCE INCREASED CUSTOMS DUTIES ON IMPORTED OIL AND HIS ANNOUNCED INTENTION TO VETO THIS LEGISLATION.

6. FINALLY, FEB 21 SOTSIALISTICHESKAYA INDUSTRIYA CARRIES LENGTHY ARTICLE ON US ECONOMIC WOES BY G. KUZNETSOV. ENTITLED "THE BELL IS ALREADY TOLLING," ARTICLE FOCUSES ON SIMULTANEOUS PROBLEMS IN US ECONOMY OF INFLATION AND RECESSION. SOMEHOW KUZNETSOV MANAGES TO LINK BOTH ILLS TO ALLEGED "MILITARIZATION" OF ECONOMY.

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7. COMMENT: WIDESPREAD COVERAGE OF US ECONOMIC- AND TRADE-RELATED THEMES IN SOVIET PRESS OVER LAST TWO DAYS APPEARS ON BALANCE INTENDED TO CONVEY MESSAGE THAT CLOSER BILATERAL TRADE TIES WOULD CLEARLY BE IN BASIC INTEREST OF US-- MUCH MORE SO THAN OTHER WAY AROUND. SOVIET PROPAGANDISTS LONG AGO HIT ON PITCH OF SELLING US-USSR TRADE TO RELUCTANT CONSERVATIVE AMERICAN GROUPS ON BASIS OF SUCH IMMEDIATE BENEFITS AS INCREASED EMPLOYMENT TO BE DERIVED FROM EXPANDED

PRODUCTION FOR SATISFYING SOVIET MARKET. SIMULTANEOUS
APPEARANCE OF VARIOUS ARTICLES LISTED ABOVE WOULD APPEAR
TO BE SLIGHTLY MORE SUBTLE APPROACH TO SAME THEME. AT
SAME TIME ARTICLES ALSO CONVEY PERCEPTION--PRESUMABLY
WELCOME TO SOVIET LEADERSHIP--THAT OFFICIAL USG POSITION
OF SEEKING CLOSER TRADE LINKS WITH USSR REMAINS UNALTERED.
STATEMENT BY SECRETARY DENT IS CONVENIENT REITERATION OF
USG OFFICIAL DETERMINATION TO FORGE AHEAD IN ALL ASPECTS
OF BILATERAL RELATIONS. IN THIS CONNECTION, SHORT ARTICLE
FROM GENEVA BY PRAVDA CORRESPONDENT I. MEL'NIKOV ON
RESULTS OF SECRETARY'S TALKS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER GROMYKO
STRESSES DESIRE OF BOTH GOVERNMENTS TO WORK IN FUTURE "IN
THE SPIRIT OF THOSE RELATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN FORMED IN
RECENT YEARS BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND THE USA."
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